

PEARL OF POLYNESIA, craggy
Bora Bora rises within a barrier
of coral and lashing surf that
thwarted Cook's only attempt to
harbor here. Shattering the little
island's isolation, an airstrip
on the islet at lower right
now regularly attracts visitors
from neighboring Tahiti.

"A BETTER SHIP for such a Service I would never wish for," commented Cook of his *Endeavour*, a craft only 106 feet long and 29 feet wide. A converted collier, she incorporated all the features Cook demanded in his oceangoing vessels. The round bluff bow and wide deep waist provided uncommon spaciousness; the small size and broad bottom permitted easy beaching for repairs and stability if the ship were to ground. Below the waterline *Endeavour* had an extra skin of thin planking fitted to the hull with thousands of closely spaced flatheaded nails—a precaution against wood-boring shipworms. Outfitted for peaceful exploration, the crowded bark also carried ten carriage guns and 12 swivel guns for defense.

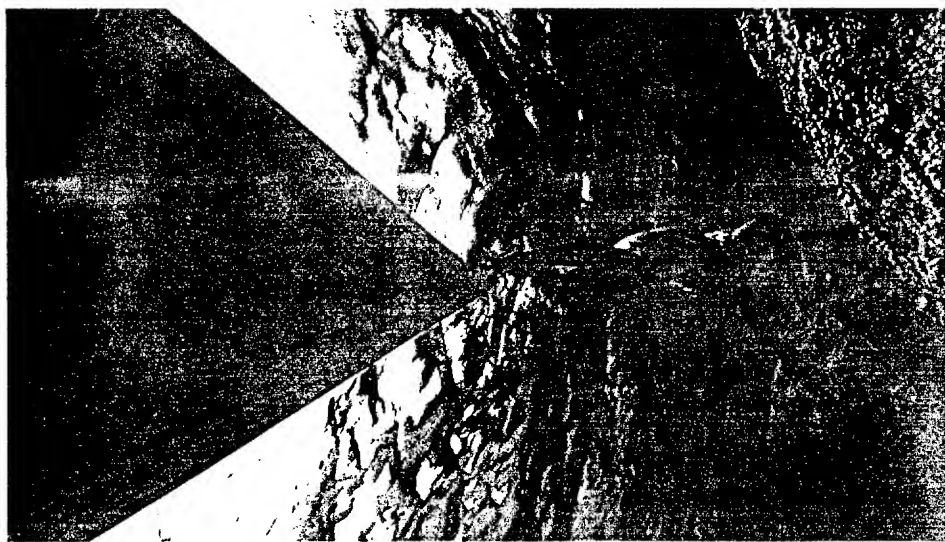
Devoted to the scientific aspects of the voyage, Cook volunteered the Great Cabin for use by the expedition naturalists—even though the room

was one of the few places in the ship where Cook, more than six feet tall, could stand erect. Here he confers with a scientist on the main deck above the cabin.

Endeavour ended her career on a Rhode Island reef in 1795, but her accomplishments still inspire men. Apollo 15 astronauts gave her name to their command spacecraft. They saw their lunar voyage, with its emphasis on scientific discovery, as a modern parallel of Cook's trailblazing first expedition.

Whisper-soft firelight enhances the beauty of a Tahitian dancer being anointed with coconut oil. During Cook's visits here, even a sliver of metal would win for a sailor the company of an island girl. Such bartering forced Cook to post guards on the ships to keep seamen from prying nails out of the planking.

All in a lather, a Tahitian youth surges to shore on a board. Here Cook first observed canoe surfing. It was the "almost amphibious" Hawaiians, though, who first demonstrated the surfboard, which, one of Cook's lieutenants wrote, "sends them in with a most astonishing Velocity...."



By a primitive but reliable means, an understanding of the reef and its depths was gained between his boat's keel and the ship-killing coral. A Polynesian priest, Tupaiia, used the same method two centuries ago to guide *Endeavour* through these reef-strewn waters. Voluntarily piloting the craft through the Society Islands, Tupaiia, aboard ship with Cook, directed islanders in accompanying canoes to plunge into the sea and check the depth wherever he suspected danger.

Elsewhere in such circumstances, crewmen forged ahead in small boats to plumb the depths with lead-weighted lines. In 1770 when Cook blundered into "the very jaws of destruction"—the Great Barrier Reef—his ship depended on a sounding boat for more than 1,000 miles

